

MORNING TALKS

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TO THE MINISTERS AT THE
GENERAL CONFERENCE
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TO THE MINISTERS ASSEMBLED AT THE GENERAL CONFERENCE,
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CHRIST OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”¹

God requires that we confess our sins, and humble our hearts before him; but at the same time we should have confidence in him as a tender Father, who will not forsake those who put their trust in him. Many of us walk by sight, and not by faith. We believe the things that are seen, but do not appreciate the precious promises given us in God's word; and yet we cannot dishonor God more decidedly than by showing that we distrust what he says, and question whether the Lord is in earnest with us or is deceiving us.

God does not give us up because of our sins. We may make mistakes, and grieve his Spirit; but when we repent, and come to him with contrite hearts, he will not turn us away. There are hinderances to be removed. Wrong feelings have been cherished, and there have been pride, self-sufficiency, impatience, and murmurings. All these separate us from God. Sins must be confessed; there must be a deeper work of grace in the heart. Those who feel weak and discouraged may become strong men of God, and do noble work for the Master. But they must work

from a high standpoint; they must be influenced by no selfish motives.

We must learn in the school of Christ. Nothing but his righteousness can entitle us to one of the blessings of the covenant of grace. We have long desired and tried to obtain these blessings, but have not received them, because we have cherished the idea that we could do something to make ourselves worthy of them. We have not looked away from ourselves, believing that Jesus is a living Saviour. We must not think that our own grace and merits will save us; the grace of Christ is our only hope of salvation. Through his prophet the Lord promises, "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon."¹ We must believe the naked promise, and not accept feeling for faith. When we trust God fully, when we rely upon the merits of Jesus as a sin-pardoning Saviour, we shall receive all the help that we can desire.

We look to self, as though we had power to save ourselves; but Jesus died for us because we are helpless to do this. In him is our hope, our justification, our righteousness. We should not despond, and fear that we have no Saviour, or that he has no thoughts of mercy toward us. At this very time he is carrying on his work in our behalf, inviting us to come to him in our helplessness, and be saved. We dishonor him by our unbelief. It is astonishing how we treat our very best Friend, how little confidence we repose in him who is able to save to the uttermost, and who has given us every evidence of his great love.

My brethren, are you expecting that your merit will recommend you to the favor of God, thinking that you must be free from sin before you trust his power to save? If this is the struggle going on in

¹ Isa. 55:7.

your mind, I fear you will gain no strength, and will finally become discouraged.

In the wilderness, when the Lord permitted poisonous serpents to sting the rebellious Israelites, Moses was directed to lift up a brazen serpent, and bid all the wounded look to it and live. But many saw no help in this Heaven-appointed remedy. The dead and dying were all around them, and they knew that without divine help their fate was certain; but they would lament their wounds, their pains, their sure death, until their strength was gone, and their eyes were glazed, when they might have had instant healing.

"As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness," even so was "the Son of man lifted up; that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life."¹ If you are conscious of your sins, do not devote all your powers to mourning over them, but look and live. Jesus is our only Saviour; and although millions who need to be healed will reject his offered mercy, not one who trusts in his merits will be left to perish. While we realize our helpless condition without Christ, we must not be discouraged; we must rely upon a crucified and risen Saviour. Poor, sin-sick, discouraged soul, look and live. Jesus has pledged his word; he will save all who come unto him.

Come to Jesus, and receive rest and peace. You may have the blessing even now. Satan suggests that you are helpless, and cannot bless yourself. It is true; you are helpless. But lift up Jesus before him: "I have a risen Saviour. In him I trust, and he will never suffer me to be confounded. In his name I triumph. He is my righteousness, and my crown of rejoicing." Let no one here feel that his case is hopeless; for it is not. You may see that you are sinful and undone; but it is just on this account that you need a Saviour. If you have sins to

¹John 3 : 14, 15.

confess, lose no time. These moments are golden. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Those who hunger and thirst after righteousness will be filled; for Jesus has promised it. Precious Saviour! his arms are open to receive us, and his great heart of love is waiting to bless us.

Some seem to feel that they must be on probation and must prove to the Lord that they are reformed, before they can claim his blessing. But these dear souls may claim the blessing even now. They must have his grace, the Spirit of Christ, to help their infirmities, or they cannot form a Christian character. Jesus loves to have us come to him, just as we are,—sinful, helpless, dependent.

Repentance, as well as forgiveness, is the gift of God through Christ. It is through the influence of the Holy Spirit that we are convicted of sin, and feel our need of pardon. None but the contrite are forgiven; but it is the grace of God that makes the heart penitent. He is acquainted with all our weaknesses and infirmities, and he will help us.

Some who come to God by repentance and confession, and even believe that their sins are forgiven, still fail of claiming, as they should, the promises of God. They do not see that Jesus is an ever-present Saviour; and they are not ready to commit the keeping of their souls to him, relying upon him to perfect the work of grace begun in their hearts. While they think they are committing themselves to God, there is a great deal of self-dependence. There are conscientious souls that trust partly to God, and partly to themselves. They do not look to God, to be kept by his power, but depend upon watchfulness against temptation, and the performance of certain duties for acceptance with him. There are no victories in this kind of faith. Such persons toil to no purpose; their souls are in continual bondage, and they

1: John 1:9.

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find no rest until their burdens are laid at the feet of Jesus.

There is need of constant watchfulness, and of earnest, loving devotion ; but these will come naturally when the soul is kept by the power of God through faith. We can do nothing, absolutely nothing, to commend ourselves to divine favor. We must not trust at all to ourselves nor to our good works ; but when as erring, sinful beings we come to Christ, we may find rest in his love. God will accept every one that comes to him trusting wholly in the merits of a crucified Saviour. Love springs up in the heart. There may be no ecstasy of feeling, but there is an abiding, peaceful trust. Every burden is light ; for the yoke which Christ imposes is easy. Duty becomes a delight, and sacrifice a pleasure. The path that before seemed shrouded in darkness becomes bright with beams from the Sun of Righteousness. This is walking in the light as Christ is in the light.

CHRISTIAN DEPORTMENT AND INFLUENCE.

THERE is a great and solemn work devolving upon ministers ; but many have not felt its weight sufficiently to balance them, and lead them to walk circumspectly. Out of the desk, their ministerial labors cease almost entirely, and their example is not worthy of imitation. Their light, jesting conversation may entertain and provoke mirth ; but both believers and unbelievers lose confidence in them as Christ's ambassadors. Such ministers may present a theory of truth to the people ; but they

have not felt its sanctifying power on their own souls, and the word spoken has but little effect.

Having laid off the armor of righteousness, they are exposed to the darts of Satan, and often fall under the power of his temptations. They do not remember that a single thoughtless act, a light and trifling word, may balance a soul in the wrong direction, and effect decisions that are made for eternity.

A spirit of jesting and joking, of lightness and trifling, is not only a stumbling-block to sinners, but a worse stumbling-block to those who thus give way to the inclination of an unsanctified heart. The fact that some have allowed this trait to develop and strengthen until jesting is as natural as their breath, does not lessen its evil effects. When any one can point to one trifling word spoken by our Lord, or to any lightness seen in his character, he may feel that lightness and jesting are excusable in himself. This spirit is unchristian; for to be a Christian is to be Christ-like. Jesus is a perfect pattern, and we must imitate his example. A Christian is the highest type of man, a representative of Christ.

Some who are given to jesting and to light and trifling remarks, may appear in the sacred desk with becoming dignity. They may be able to pass at once to the contemplation of serious subjects, and present to their hearers the most important, testing truths ever committed to mortals; but perhaps their fellow-laborers, whom they have influenced, and who have joined with them in the careless jest, cannot change the current of their thoughts so readily. They feel condemned, their minds are confused; and they are unfitted to enter upon the contemplation of heavenly themes, and preach Christ and him crucified.

The disposition to say witty things that will create a laugh, when the wants of the cause are under consideration, whether in a committee meeting, a board meeting, or any other meeting for business, is not of

Christ. This untimely mirth has a demoralizing tendency. God is not honored when we turn everything to ridicule one day, and the next day are discouraged and almost hopeless, having no light from Christ, and ready to find fault and murmur. He is pleased when his people manifest strength and firmness of character, and when they have happy, hopeful dispositions.

We should be cheerful; for there is nothing gloomy in the religion of Jesus. While all lightness, trifling, and jesting, which the apostle says are not convenient, are to be studiously avoided, there is sweet rest and peace in Jesus, that will be expressed in the countenance. Christians will not be mournful, depressed, despairing. They will be sober-minded; yet they will show to the world a cheerfulness which only grace can impart.

Peter says, "Gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." ¹ Here is a lesson for us to learn; here is a work for us to do to control the mind, not letting it drift on forbidden themes, or spend its energies on trifling subjects.

There are many who are really troubled because low, debasing thoughts come into the mind, and are not easily banished. Satan has his evil angels around us; and though they cannot read men's thoughts, they closely watch their words and actions. Satan takes advantage of the weakness and defects of character that are thus revealed, and presses his temptations where there is least power of resistance. He makes evil suggestions, and inspires worldly thoughts, knowing that he can thus bring the soul into condemnation and bondage. To those who are selfish, worldly, avaricious, proud, fault-finding, or given to detraction, — to all who are cherishing errors and defects of character, — Satan presents the indul-

¹ 1 Peter 1: 13.

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gence of self, and leads the soul off upon a track that the Bible condemns, but which he makes appear attractive.

For every class of temptations there is a remedy. We are not left to ourselves to fight the battle against self and our sinful natures in our own finite strength. Jesus is a mighty helper, a never-failing support. His followers should develop symmetrical characters by strengthening weak traits. They must become Christ-like in disposition and pure and holy in life. None can do this in their own strength, but Jesus can give the daily grace needed to do this work. None need fail or become discouraged, when such ample provision has been made for us.

The mind must be restrained, and not allowed to wander. It should be trained to dwell upon the Scriptures ; even whole chapters may be committed to memory, to be repeated when Satan comes in with his temptations. The fifty-eighth of Isaiah is a profitable chapter for this purpose. Wall the soul in with the restrictions and instructions given by the inspiration of the Spirit of God. When Satan would lead the mind to dwell upon earthly and sensual things, he is most effectually resisted with "It is written." When he suggests doubts as to whether we are really the people whom God is leading, whom by tests and provings he is preparing to stand in the great day, be ready to meet his insinuations by presenting the clear evidence from the word of God that we are keeping the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.

It is natural for us to have much self-confidence and to follow our own ideas, and in so doing we separate from God ; and we do not realize how far we are from him until the sense of self-security is so firmly established that we are not afraid of failure. We should be much in prayer. We need Jesus as our counselor ; at every step we need him as our guide and protector. If there was more praying,

more pleading with God to work for us, there would be greater dependence upon him, and faith would be strengthened to take him at his word. This faith would honor our Redeemer. It would be easier to believe that if we ask for grace or wisdom, we shall receive it, because his word says, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him."¹

"The end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer."² We are not only required to pray, but to guard the words and actions, and even the thoughts,—to "watch unto prayer." If the mind is centered upon heavenly things, the conversation will run in the same channel. The heart will overflow at the contemplation of the Christian's hope, the exceeding great and precious promises left on record for our encouragement; and our rejoicing in view of the mercy and goodness of God need not be repressed; it is a joy that no man can take from us. During the waking hours, the mind will be constantly employed. If it dwells upon unimportant matters, the intellect is dwarfed and weakened. There may be some spasmodic flashes of thought, but the mind is not disciplined to steady, sober reflection. There are themes that demand serious consideration. They are those of the great plan of redemption, which is soon to be finished. Jesus is about to be revealed in the clouds of heaven, and what manner of characters must we have, to enable us to stand in that day?

Well would it be for us if we could always remember Calvary, where Jesus bore the terrible burden of the sins of the world. In his expiring agony hear him exclaim, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!"³ and remember that he endured the hiding of his

¹ Matt. 7:7; James 1:5.

² 1 Peter 4:7.

³ Matt. 27:46.

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Father's face, that it might not be forever hidden from fallen man. He endured shame, cruel scourging, insult, and mockery, that we might be reconciled to God and rescued from endless death. If our minds dwell upon these themes, our conversation will be in heaven, from whence we look for the Saviour, and even vain thoughts will seem out of place.

He who died for us loves us with a love that is infinite. He wants us to be happy; but he would not have us find our happiness in foolish jesting and joking, which disgrace the holy cause we profess to love.

By dwelling upon the themes of eternal interest, the mind is strengthened, and the character developed. Here is the foundation of that firm, unswerving principle which Joseph possessed. Here is the secret of growth in grace and in the knowledge of the truth.

The religion of Christ is not what many think it is, nor what their lives represent it to be. The love of God in the soul will have a direct influence upon the life, and will call the intellect and the affections into active, healthful exercise. The child of God will not rest satisfied until he is clothed with the righteousness of Christ, and sustained by his life-giving power. When he sees a weakness in his character, it is not enough to confess it again and again; he must go to work with determination and energy to overcome his defects by building up opposite traits of character. He will not shun this work because it is difficult. Untiring energy is required of the *Christian*; but he is not obliged to work in his own strength; divine power awaits his demand. Every one who is sincerely striving for the victory over self, will appropriate the promise, "My grace is sufficient for thee."

Through personal effort, joined with the prayer of faith, the soul is trained. Day by day the character grows into the likeness of Christ, and finally, instead

1 a Cor. 15: 9

of being the sport of circumstances, instead of indulging selfishness, and being carried away by light and trifling conversation, the man is master of his thoughts and words. It may cost a severe conflict to overcome habits which have been long indulged, but we may triumph through the grace of Christ. He invites us to learn of him. He would have us practice self-control, and be perfect in character, working that which is well-pleasing in his sight. "By their fruits ye shall know them,"¹ is his own standard of judging character.

If we are true to the promptings of the Spirit of God, we shall go from grace to grace, and from glory to glory, until we have received the finishing touch of immortality. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure."² Can any earthly promotion confer honor equal to this,—to be sons of God, children of the heavenly King, members of the royal family? Man may be ambitious of the honor that his finite fellow-man may bestow; but what will it avail? The nobility of earth are but men; they die, and return to dust; and there is no lasting satisfaction in their praise and honor. But the honor that comes from God is lasting. To be heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ, is to be entitled to unsearchable riches,—treasures of such value that in comparison with them the gold and silver, the gems and precious stones of earth, sink into insignificance. Through Christ we are offered joy unspeakable, an eternal weight of glory. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit."³

¹ Matt. 7:20.² 1 John 3:2, 3.³ 1 Cor. 2:9, 10.

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We are wanting in simple faith ; we need to learn the art of trusting our very best Friend. Although we see him not, Jesus is watching over us with tender compassion ; and he is touched with the feeling of our infirmities. No one in his great need ever looked to him in faith and was disappointed. Brethren, do not express doubt ; do not let your lips utter one complaining, repining word. Begin now to fix your minds more firmly upon Jesus and heavenly things, remembering that by beholding we become changed into the same image.

TRUST IN GOD.

WHAT a sacred trust God has committed to us, in making us his servants to aid in the work of saving souls ! He has intrusted to us great truths, a most solemn, testing message for the world. Our duty is not simply to preach, but to minister, to come close to hearts. We should use our intrusted talents with skill and wisdom, that we may present the precious light of truth in the most pleasing manner, the way best adapted to win souls.

Paul thus speaks of the ministry of the new covenant : " Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfill the word of God ; even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints : to whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles ; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory : whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom ; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus :

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whereunto I also labor, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily."¹ What a responsibility is this! A work is here brought to view that is more laborious than merely preaching the word; it is to represent Christ in our character, to be living epistles, known and read of all men.

"The love of Christ constraineth us."² We must cherish love; and if those for whom we labor do not appreciate our efforts, we must not allow discontent or wrong feelings to rule in our hearts. Murmuring thoughts, jealousies, and evil surmisings imbitter the life and mar the labors. It is the Lord who has called us to this work, and we should have an eye single to his glory. We cannot trust to our own efforts, as though we could do the work of converting souls. God alone can convict and convert. Jesus invites sinners to come to him with all their burdens, and he will give them rest and peace.

Let us never forget that Jesus loves us. He died for us, and now he lives to make intercession in our behalf. And the Father also loves us, and desires our happiness. "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"³ Brethren, you should set an example of faith, confidence, and love, to the churches over which the Lord has made you overseers. Will you do your work with fidelity, in the fear of God? Will you feel that you must avail yourselves of every opportunity to obtain grace and power from on high, that you may render to God the very best service possible?

If, as laborers in the cause of God, you feel that you have borne greater cares and trials than have fallen to the lot of others, remember that for you there is a peace unknown to those who shun these burdens. But do not force your trials upon others; do not groan over them. There is comfort and joy in the service of Christ. The Christian gives the

¹ Col. 1:25-29.

² 2 Cor. 5:14.

³ Rom. 8:32.

Lord his entire affections, but he takes as well as gives ; and his language is not that of a murmurer or a constant backslider. He makes no effort to appear righteous, but his life shows that he is led by the Holy Spirit. He can speak with assurance of his hope in Christ ; for has he not the promise of God ? If he has complied with the conditions upon which these promises are based, God's word is pledged that he will do for him more than he asks.

We honor God most when we trust him most. Anxiety and worryment in his service, talking fears and doubts as to whether we shall be saved, savors of selfishness and unbelief. True faith is more solicitous to know what can be done to-day. As we take up our duties one by one, each will come in its proper place ; and the faithful discharge of these duties, however small, opens a field where all the powers of the mind can be employed in the service of God. We shall know and obey his will.

Brethren in the faith, express no doubts. Follow closely your Guide. You must dispense with him before you can lose your way ; for the Lord has hedged you in on every side. In the darkest hour, Jesus will be our light. "The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."¹ It is an exalted privilege to be connected with Jesus. In every condition of trial, we may have the consolation of his presence. We may live in the very atmosphere of heaven. Our enemies may thrust us into prison, but prison walls cannot cut off the communication between Christ and our souls. One who sees our every weakness, who is acquainted with every trial, is above all earthly powers ; and angels can come to us in lonely cells, bringing light and peace from heaven. The prison will be as a palace, for the rich in faith dwell there ; and the gloomy walls will be lighted up with heavenly light, as when Paul and Silas prayed and sang praises at midnight in the Philippian dungeon. Bunyan

¹ Prov. 4 : 18.

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was confined in Bedford jail ; and thence issued a light that has illuminated the pathway to the celestial city.

God is the "Rock of our salvation," a present help in every time of need. Then let us be no longer babes in Christ, but bold and firm soldiers of the cross, rejoicing in suffering the will of God.

EFFECTUAL PRAYER.

MANY prayers are offered without faith. A set form of words is used, but there is no real importunity. These prayers are doubtful, hesitating ; they bring no relief to those who offer them, and no comfort or hope to others. The form of prayer is used, but the spirit is wanting, showing that the petitioner does not feel his need, and is not hungering and thirsting after righteousness. These long, cold prayers are untimely and wearisome ; they are too much like preaching the Lord a sermon.

Learn to pray short, and right to the point, asking for just what you need. Learn to pray aloud where only God can hear you. Do not offer make-believe prayers, but earnest, feeling petitions, expressing the hunger of the soul for the Bread of Life. If we prayed more in secret, we should be able to pray more intelligently in public. These doubtful, hesitating prayers would cease. And when engaged with our brethren in public worship, we could add to the interest of the meeting ; for we should bring with us some of the atmosphere of heaven, and our worship would be a reality, and not a mere form. Those about us can soon tell whether we are in the habit of praying or not. If the soul is not drawn out in

prayer in the closet, and while engaged in the business of the day, the lack will be manifest in the prayer-meeting. The public prayers will be dry and formal, consisting of repetitions and customary phrases, and they will bring darkness rather than light into the meeting.

The life of the soul depends upon habitual communion with God. Its wants are made known, and the heart is open to receive fresh blessings. Gratitude flows from unfeigned lips; and the refreshing that is received from Jesus is manifested in words, in deeds of active benevolence, and in public devotion. There is love to Jesus in the heart; and where love exists, it will not be repressed, but will express itself. Secret prayer sustains the inner life. The heart that loves God will desire to commune with him, and will lean on him in holy confidence.

Let us learn to pray intelligently, expressing our requests with clearness and precision. Let us put away the listless, sluggish habit into which we have fallen, and pray as though we meant it. "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." Faith takes a firm hold of the promises of God, and urges her petitions with fervor; but when the life of the soul stagnates, the outward devotions become formal and powerless.

Jesus is our Saviour to-day. He is pleading for us in the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary, and he will forgive our sins. It makes all the difference in the world with us spiritually whether we rely upon God without doubt, as upon a sure foundation, or whether we are seeking to find some righteousness in ourselves before we come to him. Look away from self to the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world. It is a sin to doubt. The least unbelief, if cherished, involves the soul in guilt, and brings great darkness and discouragement. It is saying that the Lord is false, that he will not do as he has promised; and he is greatly dishonored.

EFFECTUAL PRAYER.

Some have cherished doubts, discontent, and a disposition to be on the wrong side, until they are in an atmosphere of doubt, and seem to think it praiseworthy to be on the side of the doubting. But when the believing ones shall receive the end of their faith, even the salvation of their souls, the doubting ones, who have sowed unbelief, will reap that which they have sown, and an undesirable harvest it will be.

Some obtain answers to prayer, a little freedom, and they become elated. They do not increase in faith, do not grow in strength and courage, but they depend on feeling. If they happen to feel well, they think they are in favor with God. How many stumble here! how many are overcome! Feeling is no criterion for any of us. "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."¹ We are to examine our character in God's mirror, his holy law, to detect our errors and imperfections, and then to remove them by the precious blood of Christ.

We may commit the keeping of our souls to God as unto a faithful Creator, not because we are sinless, but because Jesus died to save just such erring, faulty creatures as we are. We may rest upon God, not because of our own merit, but because the righteousness of Christ is imputed to us. We must look away from self to the spotless Lamb of God, who did no sin; and by looking to him in faith we shall become like him.

There are rich promises for us in the word of God. It is no narrow, limited provision that has been made for us. The plan of salvation is ample. We are not obliged to trust in the evidences that we had a year or a month ago, but we may have the assurance to-day that Jesus lives, and is making intercession for us. We cannot do good to those around us while our own souls are destitute of spiritual life.

Our brethren do not wrestle all night in prayer as many godly men before us have done. They sit up

bent over tables, writing lessons, or preparing articles to be read by thousands; they arrange facts in shape to convince the mind in regard to doctrine. All these things are essential; but how much God can do for us in sending light and power to convict hearts in answer to the prayer of faith! The empty seats in our prayer-meetings testify that Christians do not realize the claims of God upon them; they do not realize their duty to make these meetings interesting and successful. They go over a monotonous, wearisome round, and return home unrefreshed, unblessed.

If we would refresh others, we must ourselves drink of the Fountain that never becomes dry. It is our privilege to become acquainted with the Source of our strength, to have hold of the arm of God. If we would have spiritual life and energy, we must commune with God. We can speak to him of our real wants; and our earnest petitions will show that we realize our needs, and will do what we can to answer our own prayers. We must obey the injunction of Paul, "Arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light."

Luther was a man of prayer. He worked and prayed as though something must be done, and that at once, and it was done. His prayers were followed up by venturing something on the promises of God; and through divine aid he was enabled to shake the vast power of Rome, so that in every country the foundation of the papacy trembled.

The Spirit of God co-operates with the humble worker who abides in Christ and communes with him. Pray when you are faint-hearted. When you are desponding, close the lips firmly to men; keep all the darkness within, lest you shadow the path of another; but tell it to Jesus. Ask for humility, wisdom, courage, increase of faith, that you may see light in his light, and rejoice in his love. Only believe, and you shall surely see the salvation of God.

ARE WE IN THE FAITH?

ARE WE IN THE FAITH?

"We love him, because he first loved us."¹ It is impossible for us to believe that Jesus endured the untold agonies of the cross for us, without having our hearts melted in love for him. And if we love him, we shall be solicitous to please him, to obey him. The heart stirred by the love of Christ will earnestly inquire, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"

Dear brethren, "examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith."² Many may respond, "Why, yes, I am in the faith; I believe every point of the truth." But do you practice what you believe? Are you at peace with God and with your brethren? Can you pray with sincerity, "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors"?³ Or are you estranged from your brother, because you think he has injured you? Are there no heart-burnings among you? Is there no bitterness in your hearts, no envying, no jealousy, no evil surmising, no misjudging of your brethren? Is there no emulation, no desire for special favor or honors, no wish to have the supremacy? These feelings should not exist among Christians.

Jesus, who died for us, loves us with a love that is infinite; and we must love one another. We must put away all selfishness, and work together in love and unity. We have loved and petted ourselves, and excused ourselves in waywardness; but we have been unmerciful toward our brethren, who may not be as faulty as ourselves. The Lord loves us, and bears with us, even when we are ungrateful to him, forgetful of his mercies, wickedly unbelieving; but consider, brethren, how relentless we are to one another, how pitiless; how we hurt and wound one another, when we should love as Christ has loved us. Let us make a complete change. Let us cultivate

¹ 1 John 4:19.

² 1 Cor. 13:5.

³ Matt. 6:12.

the precious plant of love; and delight to help one another. We must be kind, forbearing, patient with one another's errors; we must keep our sharp criticisms for ourselves, but hope all things, believe all things, of our brethren.

Some of you seem to be earnestly seeking for forgiveness of sins, for freedom in God. Do you deserve the pardon that you are seeking? — No, you do not; nevertheless, God is willing to grant it freely. And dare you withhold from your brethren the forgiveness and affection of which you do not think them worthy? Would you have God deal thus with you? Deal with your brethren as you wish God to deal with you. If we expect our prayers for forgiveness to be heard, we must offer them in a forgiving spirit. We must forgive others in the same manner, and to the same extent, that we ourselves hope to be forgiven. The hard-heartedness that professed Christians manifest toward one another is not Christ-like, but savors of the satanic. We must every one of us open our hearts wide to the love of Jesus, and encourage pity and affection for our brethren.

It was "while we were yet sinners," that "Christ died for us." In view of his unmerited love and mercy toward us, how can we cherish malice, or even one feeling of unkindness toward our brethren, the purchase of his blood? Let us put away all suspicion and hatred, and all feelings of bitterness, even toward our worst enemies, those who seek to do us harm. But, brethren, do not wait till the heart is in harmony with your brother before you come to Jesus; for it is his Spirit and power working in you that will give you the victory.

Many are filled with self-importance, and esteem themselves above their brethren. Such should let self die; let the carnal mind be crucified. If you have enmity, suspicion, envy, and jealousy in your hearts, you have a work to do. Confess your sins;

come into harmony with your brethren. Speak well of them. Throw out no unfavorable hints, no suggestions that will awaken distrust in the minds of others. Guard their reputation as sacredly as you would have them guard yours; love them as you would be loved of Jesus. Work for their interest, instead of seeking to tear them down, that you may build up self on their ruins. Satan is an accuser of the brethren, and he loves to have you help him. But disappoint him; do not let him triumph over you.

Some pride themselves on being outspoken, blunt, and rough, and they call this frankness; but it is not rightly named. It is selfishness of the deepest dye. These persons may have virtues; they may be liberal and have kind impulses; but their discourteous manners render them almost insupportable. They criticise, they wound, they say disagreeable things. Does the character they are cultivating represent Jesus? Will it fit them for the society of heaven? We shall do well to examine ourselves, to see what manner of spirit we are cherishing. Let us learn to speak gently, quietly, even under circumstances the most trying. Let us control not only our words, but our thoughts and imagination. Let us be kind, courteous, in our words and deportment. There is a great neglect in this respect. We do not adorn the doctrines we profess. We are not what we might be, nor what God would have us to be. Those who hope to be the companions of holy angels, should possess refined manners. If the principles of the Christian religion are carried out in the daily life, there will be a kind thoughtfulness for others, for this was characteristic of Christ. Then, although a man may be poor, he will have true dignity; for he is God's nobleman.

Christianity will make a man a gentleman. Christ was courteous, even to his persecutors; and his true followers will manifest the same mild, self-sacrificing spirit. Look at Paul when brought before rulers.

His speech before Agrippa is a model of dignified courtesy as well as persuasive eloquence. We should not encourage the formal politeness current with the world, which is destitute of the spirit of true courtesy, but the politeness that springs from real kindness of heart.

We profess a great and holy faith; and our character must be in accordance with that faith, with God's great moral standard. Let us shun every mean action, all dishonesty, all overreaching; and if any one is guilty of wrong in this respect, let him confess his sin, and make restitution to the one whom he has wronged, and in addition bring a trespass offering to God, that when the times of refreshing shall come, his sins may be blotted out, and his name retained in the book of life.

Let us examine our hearts in the light of the great principle of the law of God as defined by Christ: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself." Here the conditions of eternal life are specified. The promise is, "This do, and thou shalt live." Are you, my brethren, carrying out these principles in your every-day life? Are there not reasons why you do not come to the light, why you have no freedom in Christ, why you do not find that rest that he has promised to all who come unto him with their burdens?

Jesus invites, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls." Have you found this rest? If not, there is something for you to do. Do not rely on an experience that you had years in the past, it is your privilege to have a living connection with Christ now. Come to him with brokenness of heart and contrition.

¹ Luke 10: 27, 28.

² Matt. 11: 28, 29.

of spirit, praying for his grace. The melting power of God can do wonders in subduing the heart, and making it tender and impressible. You may come with full assurance of faith, and he will fill your heart with rest, and peace, and love.

CHRIST'S FOLLOWERS THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD.

"Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

In all ages the people of God have been the light of the world. Joseph was a light in Egypt. He represented Jehovah in the midst of a nation of idolaters. While the Israelites were on the way from Egypt to the promised land, they were a light to the surrounding nations. Through them God was revealed to the world. Satan sought to extinguish their light; but by the power of God it was kept alive through successive generations while Israel maintained a national existence; and even during the captivity there were faithful witnesses for God. From Daniel and his companions, and Mordecai, a bright light shone amid the moral darkness of the kingly courts of Babylon. In holy vision, God revealed to Daniel light and truth that he had concealed from other men, and through his chosen servant this light has shone down through the ages, and will continue to shine to the end of time.

We who are living in this age have greater light and privileges than were given to Abraham, Joseph, Moses, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, and other ancient worthies, and we are under correspondingly greater obligation to let our light shine to the world. God has made us the depositaries of his law. We have been redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, and we are to follow in his footsteps, to represent him before the world. But are we faithful depositaries of the truth, correctly representing it amid the spiritual declension and moral corruption that now exist? Are we doing all that we might and should do to diffuse the precious light of truth? Brethren, you see the truth, you understand the claims of God's law; you know that no willful transgressor will enter into life, and yet you see that law made void in the world. What is your duty? You are not to ask, "What is convenient for me? what is agreeable?" but, "What can I do to save souls?"

There is a great work before us. The world is to be warned. This work calls for the exercise of all the talents that God has intrusted to our keeping. He has given us abilities that enable us to exert an influence on other minds. We have talents in the pen, the press, the voice, the purse, and the sanctified affections of the soul. All these talents are the Lord's. He has lent them to us, and he holds us responsible for the use we make of them,—for the faithful discharge of our duty to the world. We may come very near to Jesus; we may commune with him, and having found rest and peace to our own souls, we may show forth to others the beauties of true holiness.

We shall meet with conflicts to test our faith and courage, but they will make us strong if we conquer through the grace which Jesus is willing to give. But we must believe; we must grasp the promises without a doubt. They are ample and rich, even during the perils and trials of the last days. Hear the

assurance given by the prophet of the Lord: "Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labor of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls; yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation. The Lord God is my strength, . . . he will make me to walk upon mine high places."¹ As we exercise faith, talk faith, and act faith, the promises of God will be verified to us. And as we walk consistently with our profession of faith, we are also teaching others to walk circum-spectly.

Do not choose darkness. Come out of the cold, dark caverns of unbelief into the upper chamber, where you may bask in the sunshine of God's love, and enjoy peace and rest in the presence of Jesus. The Saviour said: "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."² When you constantly complain of darkness, you represent to the world that you are not following Jesus, or else that he has deceived you. But, dear brethren, have you not been in the habit of talking darkness and unbelief? Have you not, by so doing, greatly shadowed the path of others, and led them to think that there could be nothing attractive in the truth, nothing satisfying in the religion and service of Christ? Your words, your life, and your character have represented your religion; and how many souls have you discouraged, and balanced in the wrong direction?

Do not consult feeling; for feeling is not to be our guide. We are to walk by faith, not by sight. Do not let unbelief separate you from God. Do not let one word of unbelief or discouragement escape your lips. Satan is pleased at every such expression, because it is dishonoring to Jesus. Seek earnestly to remedy every defect of character. Put away mur-

¹ Hab. 3: 17-19.

² John 8: 12.

muring and fretfulness. In the indulgence of these traits you represent Satan, the prince of darkness, and not Christ, the Prince of light. Cast no shadow to darken the pathway of others. Walk in the light, and the peace and joy that shine in the face of Jesus will be reflected in you. Jesus lives; and his promise is, "According to your faith be it unto you."¹

Those who talk unbelief may have a little enthusiasm when the sky is bright, and everything encouraging; but when the battle goes hard, when we have to hope against hope, and urge our petitions to the throne of grace through deep darkness, then the unbelieving ones will not talk of the good land of Canaan, but will make prominent the dangers to be encountered. They will dwell on the strong walls, and the giants we shall meet, when the language of faithful Caleb should be heard: "The land . . . is an exceeding good land. If the Lord delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it us."²

Men of courage are wanted now; men who will venture something for the truth's sake; men who will be sober, but not gloomy and desponding; men who will watch unto prayer, and whose prayers will be mingled with living, active faith. We may be cheerful and even joyful. Even under temptation, our language may be that of faith and hope and courage. But no lightness, no trifling, should be indulged in; no low witticism should escape our lips, for these things give Satan great advantage. And we are living in the solemn hour of the Judgment, when we should afflict our souls, confess our errors, repent of our sins, and pray for one another that we may be healed.

If we are converted, we shall no longer represent Satan by warped, one-sided characters; but in character, in words, and in actions, we shall conform to the perfect character given us in the life of Christ. Unless we follow this perfect example, evil practices

¹ Matt. 9:22.

² Num. 14:7, 8.

will confirm us in Satan's snare. We cannot afford to dally with the tempter, — to persist in one wrong habit, to cherish one darling sin. If we confess and forsake our sin; if we come to Jesus in penitence and humility of soul, acknowledging our inability to remove one spot or stain of sin, and relying wholly on the merits of a crucified Saviour, we may expect forgiveness; for his word is pledged. He has said that he will pardon our transgressions, and blot out our sins. We must dwell upon the matchless love and compassion of Jesus, and not upon our own unworthiness and sinfulness. If we look to ourselves, all will be darkness; but Jesus is all light and life, and we have only to "look and live." We may look "unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame."¹ What tenderness, what mercy, what love, are here manifested!

Through constant watchfulness and prayer we may grow in grace, and perfect Christian characters. But prayer will be no task to the soul that loves God; it will be a pleasure, a source of strength. Our hearts will be stayed upon God, and we shall say by our daily life, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."² In view of what Jesus has done to redeem us from the power of Satan, how can we allow evil traits of character to gain the ascendancy, thus giving Satan cause to exult, and bring grief to Him who died for us?

The Lord is waiting to bestow rich blessing upon us if we will only comply with the conditions. We cannot glorify him while we cherish doubt. We must believe that he will do just what he has said he would. Remember that we have a living Saviour. If you do not feel light-hearted and joyous, do not dishonor God by talking of your feelings. Talk of the promises, talk of Jesus' willingness to bless; and before you are aware of it, the cloud will lift, light

¹ Heb. ix: 2.

² John i: 29.

MORNING TALKS.

will come into the soul, and you will find peace and rest in Jesus. Cherish love. "Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honor preferring one another."¹ Form a habit of speaking words of cheerful hope and courage, words of love and appreciation, that will bind hearts together. "If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."²

COURAGE IN THE LORD.

SOME are teaching the truth to others, when they themselves need to be taught the first principles of the Christian religion. They are at war with God through his providence. They watch for something to feel bad about; and they never fail to find it, for the faultfinding spirit is in their hearts and controls their lives. They are always dissatisfied. Their work is too hard, they are not appreciated, or they do not receive sufficient compensation. If anything crosses their track, they draw back like pettish children, forgetting that as Christ's servants they should not be affected by the course of any man. This spirit savors of Satan, and those who manifest it are thereby yielding to his control.

Ministers of this class are a sore affliction to their brethren in the ministry and to the church. They are a constant source of anxiety and care, and the harm they do the cause of God, eternity alone will reveal. You never know where to find them; for they are like the weather-vane, and change with every change of circumstances. One day they appear to be humble and affected by the Spirit of God, and our hopes are awakened; but the next day something occurs which drifts them into another current,

¹ Rom. 12:10.

² 1 John 1:7.

COURAGE IN THE LORD.

and they are harder to get along with than a willful child; for while they are children in self-control, they are men in years and stature, and cannot be corrected like a child. They do not know what harm they do by their want of self-control. While they feel under no obligations to restrain the natural impulses of the heart, what right have they to take the position of guides to the flock? The Lord has said through his apostle, "Make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way."¹ Any crooked path the leader may take, prepares the way for the weak to be turned aside from the path of safety.

These men do not see themselves; for they look through Satan's deceptive glasses. They do not know that they are contending with God by resisting the efforts of his servants in their behalf. They may once have known the love of Christ, but they have not kept faith in exercise, and it is harder to reach their hearts than it is to move those who have never been converted. They do not so readily yield to the influence of the Holy Spirit, for they have stifled conviction, and have not been obedient hearers of the word.

Some are in great peril through self-esteem. If they have a measure of success, Satan suggests to them that they are men of talent; and there are men and women professing godliness who help him in his work by repeating his suggestion. The man who is praised for his ability learns to rely on his own understanding, and does not feel his need of help from above. Selfishness becomes a ruling principle with him, his soul is spotted and marred by self-exaltation, and the weakness of his character is made manifest. The Lord leaves such persons to go on in their self-sufficiency, to work without his grace and special help; and they congratulate themselves that they have his blessing, when they are walking in the sparks of

¹ Heb. 12: 13.

their own hindering. All this labor is a positive injury; for it blocks the way against the efficient labor of devoted men. These persons need humble, pure religion, which is not tainted with self-exaltation. Jesus says to them, as he said to Peter, "When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren."¹

The part we have to act is to return to the Lord by confessing our sins to him and to one another. A broken and contrite heart he will not despise; but our self-righteousness is in his sight as filthy rags. With many, self is whole; but when they fall upon the Rock, and are broken, then the arms of Jesus will encircle them, and draw them close to his great heart of love. God will not do for us that which we can do for ourselves; but he has said, "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." And when we comply with the conditions, he will fulfill his word.

"My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord." We do not see ourselves as God sees us; therefore we do not see the necessity of repentance, of humility, and of continual reliance upon him. There are efforts made in our own strength, but there is not a dying to self; the soul is not surrendered to God. Many are making a mistake here. They are hoping to overcome through their own efforts, and by their goodness gain the assurance of the love of God. They do not exercise faith; they do not believe that Jesus accepts their repentance and contrition, and so they toil on day after day without finding rest or peace. When the heart is fully surrendered to God, love springs up in the soul, and the yoke of Christ is easy, and his burden light. The will is swallowed up in God's will, and that which was a cross, becomes a pleasure.

¹ Luke 22:32.

² Isa. 55:6-8.

When, in well doing, the keeping of the soul is committed to God as unto a faithful Creator, the light will shine upon our pathway, and it will grow brighter and brighter unto the perfect day. But it must be in well doing. We may profess Christ, and yet deny him in our lives. If our words and acts are not in accordance with his character, if we manifest selfishness, if we have a complaining spirit, if we indulge in light and trifling conversation, if we love worldly amusements more than we love God, if we take no pleasure in self-denial for Christ's sake, can we suppose that God is our guide and counselor? There must be entire obedience to God; then our hearts will be in harmony with the spirit that pervades heaven, and benevolence and brotherly love will be in active exercise.

Trials and temptations may come; but the child of God, whether minister or layman, knows that Jesus is his helper. Although we may be weak and helpless in ourselves, all the forces of heaven are at the command of the believing child of God, and the hosts of hell cannot make him depart from the right course if he will cling to God by living faith. Temptation is no sin; the sin is in yielding to temptation. "Count it all joy," says the apostle James, "when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." God permits us to be placed under circumstances that will test us, to increase our love and to perfect our trust in him. Through self-denial and suffering with Christ, we grow in grace and in the knowledge of the truth. Trials will come, but they are an evidence that we are children of God. Paul passed through great trials, but he did not despair as though his Father in heaven were dead. He rejoiced in tribulation; for he desired, through participations in the sufferings of Christ, to be conformed to his image. Let this hero of faith

speaking for himself. He says, "I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake."¹

"The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. . . . No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon."² Those who have an eye single to the glory of God, will manifest in their lives the loveliness and purity of Christ's character. The enemy will not be able to pervert their understanding, causing them to view things in a false light, and misjudge the words and motives of their brethren. They will not plan how they may gain approbation; neither will they be so deeply affected by any course that may be pursued toward them that they will give up in discouragement. Shall they forsake their post of duty because they are slighted, or imagine that they are not appreciated? No; they will seek to honor him whose servants they are. They have the Captain of their salvation to please, his orders to obey, and they will leave the result with him.

Brethren, if the eye be single, you will have well-balanced minds, and in principle you will be firm as a rock. You will remember that the eye of God is upon you, overseeing your labor; and you will move on from strength to strength, from grace to grace, gathering rays of light to reflect upon the pathway of others. Be strong in the grace of Christ, and let your hearts be filled with love to God and to one another. Remember that if you are partakers of the sufferings of Christ, you shall be also of the consolation. Though sorrowful, you may be "always rejoicing."³ Brethren, have courage in the Lord.

¹ 2 Cor. 12 : 10.

² Matt. 6 : 23-24.

³ 2 Cor. 6 : 10.

LOVE AMONG BRETHREN.

"FINALLY, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."¹

The dealings of God with his people often appear mysterious. His ways are not our ways, nor his thoughts our thoughts. Many times his way of dealing is so contrary to our plans and expectations that we are amazed and confounded. We do not understand our perverse natures; and often when we are gratifying self, following our own inclinations, we flatter ourselves that we are carrying out the mind of God. And so we need to search the Scriptures, and be much in prayer, that, according to his promise, the Lord may give us wisdom.

Though we have an individual work and an individual responsibility before God, we are not to follow our own judgment, regardless of the opinions and feelings of our brethren; for this course would lead to disorder in the church. It is the duty of ministers to respect the judgment of their brethren; but their relations to one another, as well as the doctrines they teach, should be brought to the test of the law and the testimony; then, if hearts are teachable, there will be no divisions among us. Some are inclined to be disorderly, and are drifting away from the great landmarks of the faith; but God is moving upon his ministers to be one in doctrine and in spirit.

Brethren sometimes associate together for years, and think they can trust those they know so well, just as they would trust members of their own family. There is a freedom and confidence in this association

¹ Phil. 4:8.

which could not exist among those not of the same faith. This is very pleasant while brotherly love continues; but let the "accuser of the brethren" gain admittance to the heart of one of these men, controlling the mind and the imagination, and jealousies are created, suspicion and envy are harbored; and he who supposed himself secure in the love and friendship of his brother, finds himself mistrusted, and his motives misjudged. The false brother forgets his own human frailties, forgets his obligation to think and speak no evil lest he dishonor God and wound Christ in the person of his saints; and every defect that can be thought of or imagined is commented upon unmercifully, and the character of a brother is represented as dark and questionable.

There is a betrayal of sacred trust. The things spoken in brotherly confidence are repeated and misrepresented; and every word, every action, however innocent and well-meaning, is scrutinized by the cold, jealous criticism of those who were thought too noble, too honorable, to take the least advantage of friendly association or brotherly trust. Hearts are closed to mercy, judgment, and the love of God; and the cold, sneering, contemptuous spirit which Satan manifests toward his victim is revealed.

If Satan can employ professed believers to act as accusers of the brethren, he is greatly pleased; for those who do this are just as truly serving him as was Judas when he betrayed Christ, although they may be doing it ignorantly. Satan is no less active now than in Christ's day, and those who lend themselves to do his work will manifest his spirit.

Floating rumors are often the destroyers of unity among brethren. There are some who watch with open mind and ears to catch flying scandal. They gather up little incidents which may be trifling in themselves, but which are repeated and exaggerated until a man is made an offender for a word. Their motto seems to be, "Report, and we will report it."

These tale-bearers are doing Satan's work with surprising fidelity, little knowing how offensive their course is to God. If they would spend half the energy and zeal that is given to this unholy work in examining their own hearts, they would find so much to do to cleanse their souls from impurity that they would have no time or disposition to criticise their brethren, and they would not fall under the power of this temptation. The door of the mind should be closed against "They say" or "I have heard." Why should we not, instead of allowing jealousy or evil surmising to come into our hearts, go to our brethren, and after frankly but kindly setting before them the things we have heard detrimental to their character and influence, pray with and for them? While we cannot fellowship those who are the bitter enemies of Christ, we should cultivate that spirit of meekness and love that characterized our Master,—a love that thinketh no evil, and is not easily provoked.

We are living amid the perils of the last days, and we should guard every avenue by which Satan can approach us with his temptations. (A fatal delusion seizes those who have had great light and precious opportunities, but who have not walked in the light nor improved the opportunities which God has given them. Darkness comes upon them; and they fail to make Christ their strength, and fall an easy prey to the snares of the deceiver. A mere assent to the truth will never save a soul from death. We must be sanctified through the truth; every defect of character must be overcome, or it will overcome us and become a controlling power for evil.

Cultivate whatever in your character is in harmony with the character of Christ. Cherish those things that are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report; but put away whatever is unlike our Redeemer. Selfishness is cherished to an extent that few realize; guard against it at all times and in all

places. — Do not excuse yourself in any error. If you have one objectionable trait, which you find it difficult to subdue, do not talk of your weakness as something that others must bear with. Do not soothe your conscience with the thought that you cannot overcome the peculiarities that deform your character, nor listen to Satan's suggestion that they are not very grievous. — There is no way by which you may be saved in sin. Every soul that gains eternal life must be like Christ, "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners." The followers of Christ must shine as lights in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation.

Some seek to control their surroundings, thinking that if they are placed in favorable positions, the bad traits in their character will not be developed. But God orders our surroundings, and he will place us where we shall have test after test, to prove us and to reveal what is in our hearts. Again and again we shall be brought into strait places, that it may be known whether we are indeed crucified with Christ or full of self-love. How will this testing process end with each of us? The prince of darkness will put forth all his power to retain us in his possession; but we have a mighty Helper.

— Self-love will prompt to a much better opinion of self than the word of God will warrant; for "the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" — God's word is the standard that we must all reach. It is unsafe to consult feeling or to trust to our own heart; the wise man declares, "He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool."

Church membership will not guarantee us heaven. We must abide in Christ, and his love must abide in us. We must every day make advancement in the formation of symmetrical character. "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven

¹ Heb. 7:26.

² Jer. 17:9.

³ Prov. 28:26.

is perfect.”¹ As God is perfect in his sphere, so are we required to be perfect in ours. There is a great work before us individually, to reach this high standard. Our attainments will be just in accordance with the effort we make, our character just what we choose to make it; for through the divine aid promised us, we can overcome. Jesus “knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust.”² In pitying tenderness he will give us the help and strength we need.

Let us diligently cultivate the pure principles of the gospel of Christ,—the religion, not of self-esteem, but of love, meekness, and lowliness of heart. Then we shall love our brethren, and esteem them better than ourselves. Our minds will not dwell on the dark side of their character; we shall not feast on scandal and flying reports. But “whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise,” we shall “think on these things.”³

HUMILITY AND FAITHFULNESS IN LABORERS.

MINISTERS should live close to Jesus, that they may rightly represent him to others. He has set them an example in his own ministry. They should labor for souls with the same unselfish love that characterized his labors. They have something more to do than merely to preach in the desk. This is only the beginning of their work. They are overseers of the flock; and it is their duty to “feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.”⁴ They are required to watch for souls “as they that must give

¹ Matt. 5: 48.

² Ps. 103: 14.

³ Phil. 4: 8.

⁴ Acts 20: 28.

account ;" and they need clear discernment, that no wrong influence may pervert their work.

Those who are convicted of sin by the Spirit of God, need the assistance of loving, kindly labor, that the work of grace may be carried forward to completion. This labor for souls is a part of the ministry that God requires of his servants ; but it is a part that is sadly neglected by some. They do not realize their responsibility, nor know how to deal with souls.

Some ministers choose for their sermons subjects that will please the people and offend none. This is shunning the cross of Christ. You see one man selfish ; another controlled by pride or passion ; another robbing God in tithes and offerings ; and another doubting and unbelieving. Do not leave these deceived ones to remain blinded by the enemy in regard to their own spiritual standing. For each of these there is a special message in the word of God. Pray for wisdom that you may be able so to present the instructions of that sacred word that all may see wherein their characters are defective, and what is required of them in order to conform to the true standard. Win their confidence and affection. Bring the truth as it is in Jesus to bear upon their hearts ; for there is no other power that can keep the soul steadfast. The truth, planted in the heart by the Holy Spirit, and nourished by divine grace, is our only safeguard against Satan's devices. Thus you are to labor till you can present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.

This personal labor is not the most agreeable work ; it involves a cross. Nevertheless, ministers have no right to shun the responsibilities laid upon them. To deal wisely and truly with souls is a work that calls for special help from God. A faithful performance of the duties assigned to his servants would drive every worker in the vineyard of the Lord to his closet in earnest intercession for divine aid. The

1 Heb. 13 : 17.

love of God in the heart will lead them to make earnest appeals,—to warn, entreat, and reprove. If this work is neglected, souls will continue in sin, confirmed in a wrong course, by those who have spoken to them only smooth things.

The apostle Paul felt the importance of faithfulness. He says of his own ministry in Christ, “whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus: whereunto I also labor, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.”¹ And he exhorts Timothy, “Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine.”² This is in accordance with the word which through the prophet Isaiah the Lord has spoken to the watchmen on the walls of Zion: “Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins.”³

Ministers would be more successful in their labor if they would talk less of self and more of Christ. Of ourselves, we have no power to reach hearts; it is only by divine aid that we can find access to them. Brethren, teach the people to rely upon Jesus; lead them to feel that they are not dependent upon the minister, but must have an experience for themselves. The minister is not infallible. He may err; ambition and unhallowed passion may burn in his heart; envy may mar his work; he may defraud God of the glory due to his name, by so laboring that the credit of success will be given to the poor, erring, finite instrument. The true laborer will take care that his hearers understand the leading points of our faith, and that they keep distinctly in mind the old landmarks, the way by which the Lord has led his people. He will teach them to look to God for themselves, expecting the outpouring of his

¹ Col. 1:28, 29.² 2 Tim. 4:2.³ Isa. 58:1.

Spirit. If those who profess to be teachers of the truth teach their own ideas independent of the opinions of their brethren, they should be labored with as unfaithful in their work. One who feels at liberty to advance what he chooses and keep back what he chooses, should not be encouraged to labor in the ministry; for he is failing to prepare a people to stand in the day of the Lord.

It is not the best way to have one or two ministers go over the same ground again and again. There should be an interchange of laborers. They should not be confined to one field, but should labor in different Conferences, that the churches may have the benefit of their differing gifts. When this was done in the past, greater success attended the laborers.

Brethren, the Lord will help you, if you seek his help; but do not exalt self, do not call the attention of the people to self. There is a spirit of worldliness coming into the church, and it must be firmly met and rebuked. Unless we humble our hearts before God, unless we seek him earnestly, we sha' be overcome by the temptations of Satan; and those whom we neglect to warn, to reprove, to exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine, will be ensnared by his devices, and we shall not be guiltless.

We shall none of us be saved for our own merits; the rewards of eternity are purchased by Christ, and in no case merited by man; yet ministers should remember that every man will receive according as his works have been. The trials of the great assize will proceed most accurately on the basis of works, and our listlessness and want of zeal will tell on its decisions. The parable of the talents illustrates this subject. One man becomes ruler over ten cities, another over five, another over two. Each receives in exact proportion to his work,—to the improvement he has made on the talents lent him of God; and it is the privilege of each to strive for the highest recompense.

HUMILITY AND FAITHFULNESS.

The thought should be ever present with us that we must meet the record of our lives, that we are building character for eternity. The influence of our words and acts will live, and will decide the destiny of souls. Angels of God are writing the history of our lives; let us be careful that the record is such as we shall not be ashamed to meet when the Judgment shall sit, and we shall receive according to the deeds done in the body.

If we are living branches of the True Vine, we shall bear fruit to the glory of God. "By their fruits ye shall know them."¹

DILIGENCE AND CONSECRATION NEEDED.

"CREATE in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy Holy Spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free Spirit. Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee."²

This is one of the most earnest and contrite prayers on record, and the Lord's response is, "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you."³

"Create in me a clean heart." This is beginning right, at the very foundation of Christian character; for out of the heart are the issues of life. If all, ministers and people, would see to it that their hearts are right with God, we should see much larger results from the labor put forth. The more important and responsible your work, the greater the necessity that you have clean hearts. The

¹ Matt. 7 : 20.

² Ps. 51 : 10-13.

³ Eze. 36 : 26.

needed grace is provided, and the power of the Holy Spirit will work with every effort you make in this direction. If every child of God would seek him earnestly and perseveringly, there would be a greater growth in grace. Dissensions would cease; believers would be of one heart and one mind; purity and love would prevail in the churches. By beholding, we become changed. The more you contemplate the character of Christ, the more you will become conformed to his image. Come to Jesus just as you are, and he will receive you, and put a new song in your mouth, even praise to God.

God will hear the prayer of faith; but the sincerity of our prayers will be made manifest in our harmony with the great moral standard which will test every man's character. We need to open our hearts to the influence of the Spirit, and to realize its transforming power. The reason why you do not receive more of the saving help of God is that the channel of communication between Heaven and your own souls is clogged by worldliness, love of display, and desire for supremacy. While some are conforming more and more to the world's customs and maxims, we should be moulding our lives after the divine model. And our covenant-keeping God will restore unto us the joys of his salvation, and uphold us by his free Spirit.

"Then will I teach transgressors thy ways, and sinners shall be converted unto thee." The nearer we live to God, the more we shall be able to accomplish for our fellow-men; for the Lord will work with our efforts. Your hearts are too cold and unimpressible; they should be all aglow with the love of Jesus. While hungering and thirsting after salvation yourselves, you will have a longing desire to aid in saving precious souls; and your humble, pathetic appeals to those out of Christ will move hearts. You should carry the truth to homes. Show those in error that you love them. Indifference here

is sin. There should be fewer long sermons, and more time spent in visiting, in making personal effort for souls. Self-denying labor is needed, and will result in great good, but it has been sadly neglected.

How can you associate with the young, and yet have so little desire for their salvation? Let them see that you care for their souls. As far as possible, break down every barrier that keeps them from Christ. Labor for them at their homes. Pray with and for them. Point them to the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world, and urge them to come and be healed.

Let labor for souls become a part of your life. Go to the homes of those even who manifest no interest. While mercy's sweet voice invites the sinner, work with every energy of heart and brain, as did Paul, who "ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears." In the day of God, how many will confront us, and say, "I am lost! I am lost! And you never warned me; you never entreated me to come to Jesus. Had I believed as you did, I would have followed every Judgment-bound soul within my reach with prayers and tears and warnings."

Ministers, teach the people how to work. Tell them that their usefulness does not depend so much on wealth or learning or power as on a willing mind, their consecration to Christ and his cause. In times past, God has used humble men, and because of their faith and devotion, they have often accomplished more than many more pretentious laborers. They realized their weakness and dependence upon God; and by letters, by tracts, by personal effort in appeals and warnings, by a well-ordered life and godly conversation, they turned many from error to truth, from the path of transgression to obedience to God's law. The mighty power of grace worked with them, and success attended their efforts. "God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things

of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to naught things that are: that no flesh should glory in his presence."¹

Two men start out to labor in the cause of God. One has had every advantage of education. His mind is cultivated, his powers are developed, and he is prepared to become an efficient worker. But we look in vain to see the good results of all the advantages he has enjoyed. Instead of increasing his usefulness, his education fosters a feeling of power and self-importance; he esteems himself above his less fortunate brethren. He does not continue to store his mind with useful knowledge, to fit himself for greater responsibilities. While he boasts of learning, he does not labor to the utmost of his ability, with an eye single to the glory of God. The other has good natural abilities, but a limited education. He is a constant learner in the school of Christ. The love of Jesus is in his heart, and he walks humbly with God. He is unselfish in thought and purpose, and tries to do all the good he can. As he uses the ability he has, his mind expands. The psalmist said, "The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple."²

The educated man may exalt himself over his unlearned brother, but he is like the man in the parable who hid his talent in the earth. He has shunned the trouble and exertion necessary to trade with his intrusted talent, that he may be able to return it with increase; and he will be condemned as a slothful servant, and dismissed from the presence of his Lord. But the one who is faithful in the improvement of his talents will return both principal and interest, and will hear the "Well done, good and faithful servant."³ The man who blesses society and makes a success of life, is the one, whether educated or uneducated, who uses all his

¹ 1 Cor. 1:27-29.² Ps. 119:132.³ Matt. 25:23.

powers in the service of God and his fellow-men.

In all our churches there are persons who might be educated to become workers for Christ. There is certainly a fault among us, or there would be more talent developed to unite with us in our efforts for souls. "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth laborers into his harvest."¹ Have special meetings for the education of workers. Souls for whom Christ died are perishing all around us, and what excuse can we give that they have never been warned?

If you would preach fewer sermons, and do more personal labor in visiting and praying with individuals, your ministry would be more like that of Jesus. We must have a knowledge of the truth; but we have certainly made a mistake in supposing that so much depends on long, argumentative discourses. If one part of your work must be limited, let it be the discourses; for unless your sermons are followed by personal effort, Satan will often snatch away the seed of truth sown in the heart, and the good effect will be lost.

I charge you, Do not do half-hearted work. Some of you who in the beginning of your ministry were earnest and persevering, have grown weary of protracted effort and ceaseless turmoil, and you sigh for repose, and dream of leisure and fireside comfort. Some are greatly overworked, and are suffering in consequence; and others, by doing their work negligently, have brought double work upon these unselfish, thorough, God-fearing workers. Some are not willing to bear reproach for Christ's sake. Think what mighty truths God has intrusted to our keeping, and let earnest work follow your thoughts. Do mighty strokes for God. There are no compromises to be made with sin, nor any with timidity and cowardice. The Christian laborer knows no drudgery in his Heaven-appointed work. He enters into the joy

¹ Matt. 9:38.

of his Lord in seeing souls emancipated from the slavery of sin; and this joy more than repays him for every self-denial.

Our faith is weak, our sense of God's requirements feeble. We must awake to duty. We must be endowed with power from on high. Instead of resting satisfied with our present attainments, let us cherish a longing desire that our lips may be purified, and touched with a live coal from off the altar. The words of God to us must come to the people, not in a hesitating, doubting manner, but with earnestness and power. We must pray more fervently, more perseveringly, that God may work in us and by us. In these days of multiplied popular fables, there is no way to reach the people only as God works through our efforts. Angels are commissioned to be our helpers. They are passing between earth and heaven, bearing upward the record of the doings of all the children of men.

We can never be saved in inactivity. The life of Jesus rebukes every idler. In his strength we may do much greater and more perfect work. The promises of God are rich, and full, and free, and we may have the power of his salvation with us. Then why do we not believe him and work for him? It is because threads of unbelief are woven into all the woof of life; but shall we not now begin to weave in the precious golden threads of faith? Remember, "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."¹ If clouds hide the sun from sight, we do not mourn as though it would never appear again. God's dear face of brightness is not always seen; but we are not to despond. It is our duty to trust him in the darkness, knowing that his love is changeless. Then let us put all our powers into our work; let us devote our voice and pen to the service of God, not laboring in our own strength or to please ourselves; and we shall see sinners converted, and God will give us a rich reward.

¹ 1 John 5: 4.

OUR MIGHTY HELPER.

It is our privilege to say with Paul, "I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."¹ And yet how many are making laborious work of walking in the narrow way of holiness. To many the peace and rest of this blessed way seems no nearer to-day than it did years in the past. They look afar off for that which is nigh; they make intricate that which Jesus made very plain. He is "the way, the truth, and the life." The plan of salvation has been plainly revealed in the word of God, but the wisdom of the world has been sought too much, and the wisdom of Christ's righteousness too little. And souls that might have rested in the love of Jesus, have been doubting, and troubled about many things.

You must trust Jesus for yourselves, appropriate the promises of God to yourselves, or how can you teach others to have humble, holy confidence in him? You feel that you have neglected duties, that you have not prayed as you should. You seem at a distance from God, and think that he has withdrawn from you; but it is you who have separated from him. He is waiting for you to return. He will accept the contrite heart. He has assured us that he is more willing to give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him than parents are to give good gifts to their children. We are polluted with sin; but it is possible for us to be healed from its leprosy. We are to look to the "Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."

The important future is before us; and to meet its trials and temptations, and to perform its duties, will require great faith, energy, and perseverance. But we may triumph gloriously. Not one waiting, watching, praying, believing soul will be ensnared by the devices of the enemy. All heaven is interested in

our welfare, and awaits our demand upon its wisdom and strength. If any of us are not saved, it will be because we have chosen the service of Christ's great adversary and the companionship of those who are his followers.

The Lord is willing to do great things for us. We shall not gain the victory through numbers, but through the full surrender of the soul to Jesus. We are to go forward in his strength, trusting in the mighty God of Israel.

You should never be surprised, you should never be without your armor on. Be prepared for any emergency, for any call of duty. Act promptly. God would have you minute men. Many times ministers are too precise, too calculating. While they are getting ready to do a great work, the opportunity for doing a good work passes unimproved. The minister moves on as though the whole burden rested upon himself, a poor, finite man, when Jesus is ready to carry him and his burden too. Brethren, trust self less, and Jesus more. He is willing to save the souls for whom we labor. Because he lives to intercede for us, we shall see of his great power. He "is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think."¹ Jesus wants us to ask for help; he wants us to cast our helpless souls on him; and he will give us according to our faith.

Ministers who are self-sufficient, and feel that so much depends upon themselves, give Jesus no room to work, and but little credit when he does work. They trust in their own ability, forgetting the words of Christ, "Without me ye can do nothing."² The man that is self-righteous, and wise in his own eyes,—rich and increased in goods, having need of nothing,—cannot ask in faith, and receive, because he trusts in himself, and feels no lack. His works testify that he labors out of Christ. It is those who feel themselves sinful before God, poor and helpless, that Jesus

¹ Eph. 3:20.

² John 15:5.

loves to help ; for they will appreciate his aid. They have a longing desire to do the Master's work, and, knowing that the power is not of themselves, they take hold of the mighty arm of God, and by faith claim his promises.

God is not pleased when his servants remain weak, wanting in courage, in faith, in hope, in love, and consequently inefficient laborers in his cause. God has given men reasoning powers, not to remain inactive or to be perverted to earthly and sordid pursuits, but that these powers may be developed to the utmost, and used in his service, to advance the interests of his kingdom.

A high standard of purity and nobility of character is set before the Christian, and he can attain to this excellence only through the aid of Christ. But many suffer grief, pain, and disappointment, because they are unwilling to fill the humble place which God's providence assigns them, where they will remain unnoticed and unknown. They love the supremacy, and their anxiety leads them to work against their brethren, fearing that others will be preferred above themselves. Envy, malice, jealousy, and distrust are cherished, and Jesus cannot dwell where these traits are entertained. He invites those who are ambitious of preferment to come to him, and at the foot of the cross of Calvary learn his meekness and lowliness of heart. If any are qualified for high positions of trust, the Lord will lay the burden, not on them, but on those who have tested them, and can understandingly urge them forward.

The followers of Christ should not praise and flatter one another ; for Satan will do a plenty of this work, and if persons have a high opinion of their own ability, it will prevent them from learning in the school of Christ. Let none censure and condemn others ; for in doing this they are co-laborers with him : who is the accuser of the brethren, who

would steal from their hearts every particle of love for one another. Christians will not seek to tear one another down in order to build up self, but all will endeavor to strengthen and encourage one another.

We should make it our daily care to cultivate sympathy and affection for one another. This is the fruit that grows on the Christian tree; it does not produce the briers and thorns of hatred and strife. The harsh, unsympathetic words we sometimes hear spoken, and the hardheartedness we see manifested, are wholly satanic, and this spirit must be supplanted by the spirit of Christ. Jesus bids us, "Love one another, as I have loved you. . . . By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." He is our mighty Helper; and if he abides in our hearts, we shall manifest his spirit. We shall love one another; we cannot help it; for he is love.

CONSISTENCY IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE.

We have every evidence that Jesus is waiting to bless us. It is not his will that we should go forth to labor in his cause, and yet have no special help, no power from on high, to attend our labors. God has never bidden us hold up the standard of his law in these days of general apostasy, without the aid of divine power. We may have help from heaven, and we should not feel free to go to battle without the evidence that God's presence will attend us.

We need to have a deeper experience. We must pray more, believing that we have a living Saviour. Ministers, you who have had years of experience, never let the hand of faith tremble in grasping the

1 John 3: 24, 25.

promises of God; your unbelief is a stumbling-block to the young and inexperienced, and gives the powers of darkness occasion to triumph.

You want to do a great work, but many do not work in the right spirit. You carry heavy burdens, and groan under the load, when Jesus invites you to lay your burdens at the foot of the cross, and find rest to your souls. When we see you working so hard, and almost ready to faint, when we see you grieve and mourn at almost every step, we know that you have lessons to learn in the school of Christ before you can successfully teach others. Without Jesus by your side you will find the way and the work hard. You have much to learn, dear brethren, before you will accept the rest that he invites you to find in him. If you look to yourselves, and deplore your weakness and sinfulness, and continue to do this, you will make no advancement, but will remain spiritual dwarfs. You should be intelligent, growing Christians; for how else can you labor with the zeal, energy, and devotion necessary to insure success?

Do not cultivate a pride for consistency in petty matters. Such a course lends no strength to the cause of truth. We are none of us required to make ourselves singular, or to be martyrs in a small way all through life, by contending for little things when there is really nothing to contend about. Those who take this course pity themselves, thinking they have so much trouble on account of being conscientious, upright, and straight-forward in everything. But instead of being influenced by conscientiousness, they are indulging a wicked, selfish pride of notions. That life that is thought so straight-forward, is full of crookedness, and no one can live at peace with them, except by humoring their whims, and ever studying to avoid a collision.

If these persons could only know how much trouble and grief they bring upon themselves by imagining that they are having a hard time and are great suffer-

ers, they would change the current of their thoughts. We need not keep our own record of trials and difficulties, griefs and sorrows. All these things are written in the books, and Heaven will take care of them. While we are carefully counting up these disagreeable things, many things that are pleasant to reflect upon are passing from the memory; such as the merciful kindness of God surrounding us every moment, and the love over which angels marvel, that God gave his Son to die for us.

The path of uprightness is the path of peace. Those who have the meekness and lowliness of Christ can walk this humble path calmly, restfully, trustfully. No matter what may be our temperament, we may walk this path if we will. It is plain, and there is no need of constant anxiety and fear, fretting and worry, lest we shall lose the way. This path is the highway of holiness, cast up for the ransomed of the Lord to walk in. It is the glorious path of the just, which "shineth more and more unto the perfect day."¹ Those who walk in this way will wear a cheerful, happy countenance; for it is lighted up by bright beams from the Sun of Righteousness.

Do not be unreliable in your Christian course. Sin must not be cherished. This is a time when the love of many is waxing cold, and any defection on your part may encourage others in a wrong course, and lead to many and grievous transgressions. Do not set an example of lukewarmness; do not turn away from testimonies of the Spirit of God. We are intrusted with a solemn message to give to the world, and there is much at stake. We cannot be safe amid the temptations that surround us in these times of peril, without constantly watching unto prayer. We must guard against accepting a low standard of our own instead of the high Bible standard of character. Satan works through faults of character to gain control of the whole mind, and he knows that if these faults are cherished, he will succeed. Often

¹ Prov. 4:18.

he gains the advantage, and betrays into sin those who should represent Christ to the world; and our Saviour is more deeply afflicted by this ingratitude and disobedience than is a tender, loving mother by the misconduct of a wayward child.

You may forget childish things, and grow in grace day by day. As you make advancement, set your face like a flint against all falsehood, all pretense. You will sometimes be flattered by men, but more frequently by women. Especially when you present the truth in new fields, you will meet persons who will engage in this wicked flattery. As a servant of Christ, despise this flattery; shun it as you would a venomous serpent. Rebuke the woman who will praise your smartness, holding your hand as long as she can retain it in her own. Have little to say to persons of this class; for they are the agents of Satan, and carry out his plans by laying bewitching snares to beguile you from the path of holiness. Every sensible Christian lady will act a modest part; she will understand the devices of Satan, and will not be his co-laborer.

Shun the society of those who by their arts would weaken in the least your purpose to do right, or bring a stain upon the purity of your conscience. Do not give them your time or your confidence; for they will leave you feeling bereft of your spiritual strength. Do nothing among strangers, on the cars, in the home, in the street, that would have the least appearance of evil.

Remember that your works must stand the test of the Judgment. Let the eye be single to the glory of God, the heart pure, the thoughts brought into obedience to the will of God. Do something every day to improve, beautify, and ennoble the life that Christ has purchased with his own blood.

It was the joy of Christ to save souls. Let this be your work and your joy. Perform all duties and make all sacrifices for Christ's sake, and he will be

your constant helper. Go straight forward when the voice of duty calls; let no seeming difficulties obstruct your path. Take up your God-given responsibilities; and as you bear your sometimes heavy burdens, do not ask, "Why idle stands my brother, no yoke upon him laid?" Do the duty nearest you thoroughly and well, not coveting praise, but working for the Master because you belong to him.

DUTIES AND PRIVILEGES OF THE CHRISTIAN LABORER.

It is a privilege to express my gratitude to God for these meetings now in the past. We know that we have had the presence and blessing of God. He has breathed upon us his Holy Spirit. To me and to many others, heaven has seemed very near; and we have been led to rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

Through the Bible readings the truth has been brought out with clearness and power. Deeper, broader views have been taken of divine truth and of our responsibility to God. Hearts have been subdued and softened by the love of God. Through grace the capacity to understand and appreciate the truth has been enlarged; and as we continue to advance in grace, our ability will still further increase, and we shall better understand the ways of God and the plan of redemption.

The morning meetings have been most precious. To me they have been a continual feast,—like heavenly manna to my soul. We have met Jesus in the assembly of his people. We have learned of him, and of his willingness to receive all who come

to him in humble faith, taking God at his word. We have learned that if we would receive the dew of divine grace, we must allow nothing to come between God and our souls. We have seen many obtaining such a knowledge as they never had before of the true Source of spiritual strength, of moral power.

But we are now about to separate and to be widely scattered. Our ministers go to their several fields of labor refreshed and strengthened, with broader views of the love of God, and of his willingness to work with their efforts, than they have heretofore had. Sensitive persons, as they view the conflicts and trials before them, shrink from the responsibility they must bear in warning the world of the judgments that are about to come. They fear that its rude touch will stain their souls. But we are none of us to be shut up as precious perfumes lest the fragrance shall escape. We have enjoyed a Pentecostal season; we have been warmed by the love of Jesus, invigorated by the clear, firm truths of the word of God, and refreshed by the dews of divine grace, all for a purpose, that we may shed forth to the world a sweet fragrance from Eden. We have gathered rays of divine light that they may be reflected to others in good works.

There are souls to be won to Christ. There is a great and solemn work before us to prepare a people to stand in the day of the Lord. We have but little time here, and the best use we can make of our faculties is to consecrate them to the work of God. It is the duty of all, not only of those who occupy the position of watchmen on the walls of Zion, but of the laymen also, to do their utmost to advance the cause of God and save their fellow-men. Opposition must be met. We shall be hated of all men for Christ's sake, and by Satan, because he knows that this work is attended by divine power, which will undermine his influence. But heaven is open before us; we may take hold of divine strength. As children of

God it is our privilege and duty to come directly to him, and claim a Father's blessing. He will give it. Iniquity abounds, and for this very reason, God is willing to give more grace, and reveal himself to his people.

I beseech you, do not withhold yourselves from God. The moment you surrender yourselves wholly to him, in simple faith, Jesus accepts you, and encircles you in his arms of love. He holds you more firmly than you can grasp him. Come to the light, and triumph in God. Then shall your peace be as a river, and your "righteousness as the waves of the sea."¹

Cease to cherish and excuse sin; for sin caused the death of the Son of God. Let your conversation be in heaven, "from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ."² Never forget, wherever your lot may be cast, that you are pilgrims and strangers here, journeying to a better country, even a heavenly. The talents you possess, the property God has lent you, must be used in doing good, in laying up treasure in heaven. The work which you are doing with your hand or your brain, must stand the test of the judgment. How will it then appear? Are you acting well your part in preparing yourselves and others for glory, honor, and immortality? Are you doing anything that you will wish undone when the books shall be opened, and you meet your deeds as they stand registered in heaven?

"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is."³ "The world knoweth us not, because it knew him not."⁴ We are not understood by the world, we shall never be; but we must not let this discourage us. We are not to look at present appearances, nor be angry when we are misjudged, but we should improve every opportunity of doing good.

¹ Isa. 48:18² Phil. 3:20³ 1 John 3:2, 3.

DUTIES AND PRIVILEGES.

It is wise to seek humility and meekness, and carefully to avoid raising a combative spirit, which will close hearts and ears to the truth. Hold your mouth as with a bridle when the wicked are before you. When tempted to say sarcastic things, refrain. Censure no one; condemn no one. Let the life argue for Jesus, and the lips be opened with wisdom to defend the truth. The consistent life, the long forbearance, the spirit unruffled under provocation, is always the most conclusive argument and the most solemn appeal. We are often brought into positions that are trying, where human nature longs to break forth, but in such cases, be still, do not retaliate.

We must drink deeper draughts from the well of salvation. How can we possibly enter into the spirit of Christ's teachings unless we are partakers of the divine nature? We are seeking to vindicate the law of God. We need the energy of the Holy Spirit to accompany our efforts. Never venture to enter the pulpit until you have wrestled with God in prayer, and come forth as seeing Him who is invisible, with your faces lighted up with beams from the Sun of Righteousness. You will then have no tame words to offer. The divine truths which glow in your own breast will kindle the hearts of others. The men who would teach others the secret of success in the sacred ministry should understand that secret themselves. The best way to teach youthful laborers is to do yourselves what you expect them to do.

In every prayer, let the hand of living faith lay hold upon infinite help. Faith is the medium by which the renewed heart is drawn close to the great heart of love. Faith elevates the sinking soul. Faith lightens every burden and relieves every weariness, by the anticipation of the mansions Jesus has gone to prepare for them that love him.

Jesus is the foundation, the author and the finisher, of our faith. Why are we so powerless?

Jesus lives ; and because he lives, we shall live also. He is to us a risen Saviour ; not a shrouded Saviour in Joseph's new tomb, which was closed with a great stone and sealed with the Roman seal. Mourn not as those who are hopeless and helpless ; never, under any circumstances, give way to despair ; but from grateful hearts, from lips touched with holy fire, let the glad song ring out, "Jesus is risen ; he lives to make intercession for us." Grasp this hope, and it will hold the soul like a sure, tried anchor. Believe, and thou shalt "see the glory of God."¹

Will it make you sad to be buffeted, despised, derided, maligned by the world ? It ought not ; for Jesus told us just how it would be. "If the world hate you," he says, "ye know that it hated me before it hated you." The apostle Paul, the great hero of faith, testifies, "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."² Look up, my brethren, look up. Let the love of God into your souls. Through Jesus the treasures of heaven are at our command, and what is there that he will not do for us ? The Father also loves us, and is waiting to be gracious. "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things ?"³

Are we working to proclaim truth, righteousness, and the love of God ? This is the work that is assigned us. Even in bereavement we should not stop to grieve ; but let us show our love for the faithful workers who have gone to their rest, by doing the work they would have done had they lived. While we do our own work, we may also take up theirs where they left it, and firmly and courageously carry forward the banner of truth to final victory.

¹ John 12 : 40. ² John 15 : 18 ; Rom. 8 : 18 ; 1 Cor. 4 : 17. ³ Rom. 8 : 32.

Brethren, your aims are altogether too low. You have not used the great moral faculties of the soul,—faith, hope, and love. These powers are not given us to lie dormant, but that through their exercise the soul may be brought into harmony with heaven. With many of you they are paralyzed through inaction, and, as a consequence, you are weak and helpless; but do not let your great need discourage you. The Saviour of sinners, the Friend of the friendless, with compassion infinitely greater than that of a tender mother for a loved and afflicted child, is inviting, “Look unto me, and be ye saved.” “He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.”¹ We may take hold of his strength, and make peace with God. Jesus will quicken all the faculties of the soul, and implant new life and energy.

While you should make every effort to reach the highest standard of intellectual excellence, you should avoid self-sufficiency and dependence on your own ability. Learn of Jesus. He was the greatest teacher the world ever knew; yet he spoke in the language of common life. He met the necessities of all. He adapted his instruction to all times and places, to both the rich and the poor, the educated and the ignorant. He ever dwelt upon the grandest themes than can engage the attention; and he presented them in such a form, and used such illustrations, that the feeblest minds could grasp his meaning, while the most intelligent were attracted and instructed.

Let us beware lest we lose the simplicity of the gospel of Christ. We must become as little children in humility, in consciousness of our own weakness. We must learn from the Divine Teacher lessons of higher wisdom than were ever taught in the most exalted schools of human institution.

¹ Isa. 53: 22; 53: 5.

There is danger of not making Christ's teachings a personal matter, of not receiving them as though they were addressed to us personally. In his words of instruction, Jesus means me. I may appropriate to myself his merits, his death, his cleansing blood, as fully as though there were not another sinner in the world for whom Christ died. In listening to his teachings, with understanding open to receive his words, we display the highest wisdom. In being doers of the word,—obeying Christ by leading self-denying lives and forming pure and holy characters,—we shall secure the life which measures with the life of God.

There are toils and conflicts and self-denials for us all. Not one will escape them. We must tread the path where Jesus leads the way, it may be in tears, in trials, in bereavement, in sorrow for sins, or in seeking for the mastery over depraved desires, unbalanced characters, and unholy tempers. It requires earnest efforts to present ourselves a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God. It takes the entire being, complete consecration, entire submission. There must be no chamber of the mind where Satan can hold sway, and carry out his devices. Self must be crucified. Sacrifices must be made that will seem like taking the very life-blood from the heart.

When self dies, there will be awakened an intense desire for the salvation of others,—a desire which will lead to persevering efforts to do good. There will be a sowing beside all waters; and earnest supplication, importunate prayers, will enter heaven in behalf of perishing souls. There will be an earnestness, a persistency, that will not let go. Love to Jesus will lead to ardent love for the souls of our fellow-men.

Now, as we are about to separate, the question arises, Shall we all meet again in General Conference? Probably we shall not; but where, then, will be our next grand meeting? When shall we again

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greet each other? We have wept and rejoiced together here; but if we never meet again on earth, shall we unite our voices in songs of triumph around the great white throne? Shall we each prove worthy of the precious boon of eternal life? God grant that not one face may be missing, not one voice wanting, when the hallelujahs are sung in the courts of heaven.